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The Qur'an's Condemnation of Feminicide

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the Qur'anic perspective on femicide—the deliberate killing of women because of their gender, patriarchal domination, or social structures that devalue women. Using the thematic interpretation (*tafsīr mawḍū'ī*) method, it analyzes QS. al-Takwīr : 8–9, al-An'ām : 137 and 151, al-Isrā': 31, and al-Naḥl: 58–59 through a normative and socio-contextual approach. The findings show that the Qur'an firmly rejects the killing or devaluation of women, condemns female infanticide, and affirms the sanctity, equality, and dignity of all human life. These principles provide an ethical and religious foundation for challenging femicide, preventing gender-based violence, and protecting women's fundamental right to life.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout human history, women have often been the most vulnerable group to various forms of social injustice and structural violence. From a gender perspective, women experience at least five distinct gender-based experiences: subordination, marginalization, stigmatization, violence, and the double burden. These patterns arise not only from biological factors but are shaped by cultural constructs that place women in an inferior position to men. This view is rooted in a long history of patriarchal bias that denies women's full humanity. The historical roots of this discrimination can be traced back to classical Western philosophy. Aristotle, as cited by Smith, argued that women were "imperfect men," inferior beings unworthy of equal standing in the public sphere (Smith, 1983). This view, although born in an ancient Greek context, had a widespread influence on the value systems and social structures of both the Western and Eastern worlds, which in turn inherited the assumption that women deserved to be controlled, even eliminated, if they did not fulfill the "ideal role" determined by society. From this view grew a culture of violence against women, reaching its extreme point in the practice of femicide, the murder of women because of their gender.

According to a World Health Organization (WHO) report, the phenomenon of femicide is the murder of women committed due to hatred or gender-based discrimination. This definition has since expanded to include all forms of murder against women, both adults and children. Global data shows staggering rates of femicide: approximately 66,000 women are murdered annually, and in 2017 the number rose to 87,000, or approximately 137 cases per day worldwide. Of these, 35% of the perpetrators are intimate partners of the victims—husbands, ex-husbands, or boyfriends—referring to intimate femicide (World Health Organization, 2019). In addition, the WHO and the National Commission on Violence Against Women (2020) also identified various other types of femicide, such as: 1) Honor killing (killing in the name of family honor), 2) Femicide due to dowry, 3) Non-intimate femicide by perpetrators without personal ties, 4) And other forms mentioned

in the Vienna Declaration, including murder related to armed conflict, female genital mutilation, and murder accused of sorcery (CIOMS, 2016; Stadler, 2015).

In Indonesia, cases of femicide are also a serious concern. In 2020, there were 97 cases of femicide recorded in one year, with common motives being jealousy, offended masculinity, rejection of sexual relations, or the urge to "restore family honor." One case that attracted public attention was the first honor killing in Indonesia, namely the murder by Darwis of his daughter, Rosmini (16 years old) in Bantaeng, South Sulawesi, for allegedly tarnishing the family's honor (*siri' ripakasiri'*). This case shows that the patriarchal culture that makes women a symbol of family honor is still alive, even in modern societies where the majority are Muslim.

These facts show that femicide is not merely an individual crime, but a social phenomenon rooted in the construction of patriarchal culture. In the context of Muslim countries, including Indonesia, this phenomenon has a historical intersection with similar practices that have been known since the pre-Islamic Arab period. In the *Jahiliyyah* tradition, women were seen as a burden and a source of shame for the family. This view gave rise to the heinous practice of burying baby girls alive (*wa'd al-banāt*), an ancient form of femicide carried out to maintain tribal honor or for economic reasons. History records that this practice was common in several tribes, such as the Bani Tamim, as narrated by Haitsam bin Adi and Ar-Ruhaili who allege that the Prophet's companion, Qais bin 'Ashim, had committed this act before embracing Islam (Ar-Ruhaili, 2004).

The social conditions of the Arab *Jahiliyyah* era were described by Sayyid Quthb and Nurhakim as a society without solid moral guidance, dominated by tribal fanaticism, injustice, and the justification of any means to maintain honor. In this context, the Qur'an came bringing a major moral revolution: upholding human dignity without gender discrimination, eliminating the heinous practice of female infanticide, and affirming the equal human value of men and women before Allah SWT (Nurhakim, 2004; Sekardilla et al., 2024). The Qur'an contains several passages that explicitly reject the killing of women, particularly practices associated with *wa'd al-banāt* (female infanticide) and killings committed in the name of family honor. These verses are distributed across several surahs and demonstrate the Qur'an's comprehensive concern for the protection of human life. QS. al-Takwīr [81]: 8–9, for example, portrays the profound moral condemnation of female infanticide through the image of the girl who was buried alive and subsequently questioned about the sin for which she was killed. This depiction exposes the injustice of a social system that regarded female life as lacking value.

Other passages reinforce the same principle. QS. al-An'ām [6]: 137 and 151, QS. al-Isrā' [17]: 31, and QS. al-Naḥl [16]: 58–59 reject the killing of children because of poverty, economic anxiety, social pressure, or concerns related to family honor. These verses demonstrate that neither material circumstances nor cultural expectations can provide legitimate justification for taking innocent life. Meanwhile, QS. al-Mumtaḥanah [60]: 12 records the pledge of women to the Prophet not to kill their children, further illustrating the Qur'anic transformation of social norms that had previously tolerated such practices. In addition, QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 178 establishes the principle of *qiṣāṣ*, which functions within Islamic legal thought as an important mechanism for protecting human life and ensuring accountability for unlawful killing.

Taken collectively, these verses demonstrate that the Qur'an addresses the problem of femicide at moral, theological, legal, and social levels. The prohibition against killing women and children reflects the principle of *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (protection of life), one of the fundamental objectives of *maqasid al-shari'ah*. At the same time, the Qur'anic emphasis on human dignity challenges social structures that discriminate against women or consider their lives less valuable. Previous studies, including those conducted by Nicole Etherington et al., Jacquelyn C. Campbell, Sujay Patel and Amin Gadit, Muhammad et al. (2012), and Ali (2021), have examined femicide and honor killing from various perspectives. Nevertheless, relatively limited research has specifically investigated these phenomena through a Qur'anic framework using the *tafsīr mawḍū'ī* (thematic interpretation) approach. This study therefore seeks to address this gap by systematically examining relevant Qur'anic verses and their implications for contemporary understandings of femicide and gender-based violence (Ali, 2021; Ardiansyah, 2024).

Therefore, this study attempts to compile a thematic analysis of the verses of the Qur'an that condemn the practice of femicide, especially the honor killing type, through the perspective of Diana Russell's femicide theory, which defines femicide as the killing of women by men because of hatred, humiliation, or a sense of ownership (Caputi & Russell, 1990). This theory is relevant because it has appropriate indicators and causal structures that are in line with cases of femicide criticized by the Qur'an, especially in the social context of *Jahiliyyah* and contemporary phenomena.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2.1. Thematic Findings of Maudhū'ī's Interpretation of Selected Verses

The examination of relevant Qur'anic verses reveals a consistent ethical orientation toward affirming the sanctity of human life and rejecting practices that result in the killing or dehumanization of women. This thematic pattern can be identified both in the Qur'anic condemnation of female infanticide during the pre-Islamic period and in the broader prohibition of unlawful killing. Although the historical circumstances addressed by the Qur'an differ from contemporary forms of gender-based violence, the underlying ethical problem remains comparable: the denial of women's fundamental right to life and their reduction to objects whose existence may be determined by patriarchal, economic, cultural, or social considerations. Therefore, the Qur'anic discourse on the protection of life provides an important conceptual foundation for examining modern femicide from an Islamic perspective (Lindstedt, 2023).

The verses examined in this study include passages concerning the burial of infant girls alive, as well as verses that establish the general prohibition against unjustified killing. Their thematic analysis indicates two fundamental normative principles. First, the Qur'an prohibits the taking of human life without a legitimate *sharī'ah* justification. Life is regarded as a divine trust and therefore cannot be arbitrarily taken on the basis of personal interests, cultural traditions, economic calculations, social pressures, or claims of family honor. Second, the Qur'an affirms human dignity as an inherent value that is not determined by gender. Consequently, women possess the same fundamental moral status and right to life as men. These principles provide a significant framework for critically evaluating both historical and contemporary forms of violence against women (Abror et al., 2025).

First, the Qur'anic text explicitly rejects the practice of killing female infants that existed among certain communities in the pre-Islamic Arabian context. The depiction of the buried girl in QS. al-Takwīr [81]: 8–9 presents a powerful moral indictment of a social order that denied the value of female life. Likewise, other verses concerning the killing of children emphasize that economic anxiety, social expectations, or cultural traditions cannot constitute legitimate grounds for taking innocent life. Classical exegetes generally understand these passages as a direct condemnation of *wa'd al-banāt*, namely the practice of burying newborn or young girls alive. The Qur'an thus transforms what had been treated as a socially accepted practice into an object of moral criticism and divine condemnation. This demonstrates the Qur'an's effort to reconstruct a social consciousness based on the recognition of the intrinsic value of human life.

Second, Qur'anic verses containing the principle that whoever kills a soul unjustly are particularly important for establishing the universal sanctity of life. QS. al-Mā'idah [5]: 32, for example, conveys the seriousness of taking human life and establishes a broad ethical principle concerning the protection of humanity. Although the verse emerges within a particular narrative and legal context, its moral significance extends to the rejection of unjustified violence against every human being. From this perspective, killing women because of family honor, economic difficulties, gender discrimination, marital conflict, or social pressure cannot be justified by Islamic ethical principles. The protection of life therefore applies universally and cannot be restricted according to gender or social status.

Third, the Qur'anic ethical values of *raḥmah* (compassion), *'adl* (justice), and *karāmah* (human dignity) reinforce the objectives of *maqasid al-shari'ah*. Within this framework, the preservation of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) constitutes a fundamental objective of Islamic law, while the protection of dignity and honor (*ḥifẓ al-'ird*) further strengthens the obligation to prevent violence and humiliation. These principles provide a normative basis for rejecting contemporary femicide as a manifestation of gender-based dehumanization. Modern femicide may occur in circumstances substantially different from *wa'd al-banāt*, yet both can involve an underlying perception that women's lives are less valuable and may therefore be sacrificed because of gender, honor, economic concerns, or patriarchal expectations (Mutasir & Busyro, 2023).

Accordingly, the thematic interpretation of these Qur'anic verses demonstrates that the prohibition of femicide is not limited to condemning a particular historical practice. Rather, it reflects a broader Qur'anic moral vision that seeks to protect human life, dignity, and justice. The transformation from the pre-Islamic condemnation of female infanticide to the contemporary struggle against gender-based killings can therefore be understood through the continuity of Qur'anic ethical principles. The Qur'an provides a normative foundation for challenging social structures that legitimize violence against women and for developing a more just social order in which every individual, regardless of gender, is recognized as possessing an equal and inviolable right to life and human dignity.

2.2. Quranic Condemnation of the Practice of Killing Women: Historical Context and Normative Meaning

An analysis of the linguistic dimensions, historical circumstances, and exegetical interpretations of the relevant Qur'anic verses reveals differences in emphasis between classical and contemporary approaches. Classical exegetes generally interpreted the verses primarily in relation to the historical practice of burying female infants alive, known as *wa'd al-banāt*. In contrast, contemporary contextual interpretations tend to extend the ethical implications of these verses to encompass broader forms of discrimination, violence, and deprivation directed against women on the basis of gender. This development demonstrates that the *tafsīr mawḍū'ī* approach can provide a framework for connecting the Qur'anic condemnation of historical practices with contemporary phenomena such as femicide and gender-based violence (Aini & Riyanni, 2022).

The verses concerning practices associated with the *Jāhiliyyah*, particularly female infanticide, function as explicit moral critiques of a social system that denied the value of female life. Classical exegetical literature explains that *wa'd al-banāt* could be motivated by several factors, including concerns about family honor, economic hardship, fear of poverty, and social shame. QS. al-Takwīr [81]: 8–9 presents a particularly powerful rhetorical depiction of this practice through the question directed toward the buried girl concerning the sin for which she was killed. The rhetorical structure of the verse shifts attention away from the alleged wrongdoing of the victim and toward the responsibility of the perpetrators, thereby exposing the injustice inherent in the practice. Similarly, QS. al-Mā'idah [5]: 32 establishes the profound value of human life by emphasizing the seriousness of unjustly taking a human life. From a thematic perspective, this principle extends beyond its immediate historical context and establishes a broader ethical prohibition against killing on the basis of gender, honor, economic considerations, or social prejudice (Yusuf et al., 2020).

The thematic interpretation of these verses consequently positions the Qur'anic condemnation of female infanticide as more than a rejection of a particular historical custom. Rather, it establishes a universal ethical principle that human life possesses inherent dignity and cannot be taken merely because of an individual's gender. Contemporary femicide can therefore be critically examined as a modern manifestation of the same dehumanizing logic that the Qur'an sought to dismantle. Although the forms and circumstances may differ, both phenomena can involve the construction of women as less valuable, subordinate, or expendable within patriarchal social structures.

Amina Wadud's feminist hermeneutical approach provides an important methodological foundation for developing this contextual reading. Wadud emphasizes the necessity of interpreting the Qur'an in ways that recognize women's lived experiences and uphold gender justice while remaining attentive to the historical context of revelation. When integrated with the *tafsīr mawḍū'ī* method, her approach makes it possible to broaden the ethical implications of Qur'anic prohibitions against killing and examine their relevance to contemporary forms of gender-based violence. Such an approach does not disregard the original historical meaning of the verses but seeks to identify the universal moral principles embedded within them (Hamid et al., 2025).

Fazlur Rahman's theory of Qur'anic interpretation strengthens this analytical framework by directing attention toward the Qur'an's broader ethical objectives rather than limiting interpretation to isolated textual meanings. Through his double-movement approach, Qur'anic teachings are first understood within their historical and socio-cultural contexts, after which their underlying moral principles are formulated and applied to contemporary realities. In relation to femicide, this approach allows the Qur'anic emphasis on the sanctity of life, rejection of social stigma, and protection of human dignity to be understood as part of a wider ethical transformation introduced by revelation.

Therefore, the integration of *tafsīr mawḍū'ī*, Amina Wadud's gender-sensitive hermeneutics, and Fazlur Rahman's contextual methodology offers a comprehensive interpretive framework for examining contemporary femicide. The thematic approach identifies and connects relevant Qur'anic verses, Wadud's perspective highlights gender justice and women's lived experiences, while Rahman's methodology facilitates the contextualization of Qur'anic ethical principles within modern social realities. Through this combination, the Qur'anic condemnation of female infanticide is not restricted to its historical manifestation during the *Jāhiliyyah* period. Rather, its fundamental ethical message can be extended to contemporary challenges involving gender discrimination, patriarchal domination, and violence against women. Such an interpretation reinforces the principle that every human being possesses an equal and inviolable right to life and dignity, thereby positioning the Qur'an as an ethical resource for challenging contemporary femicide.

2.3. The Relevance of Maqashid Asy-Syar'iyyah: Hifzhun Nafs and Karamah Insaniyyah as Normative Foundations

The principles of *maqasid al-shari'ah*, particularly *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (the protection of human life) and *karāmah insāniyyah* (human dignity), provide a strong normative foundation for understanding femicide as more than a social or criminal violation. From an Islamic perspective, the deliberate killing of women on the basis of gender, patriarchal assumptions, family honor, or discriminatory social norms constitutes a serious violation of the fundamental values promoted by the Sharī'ah. These principles establish that the preservation of human life and the protection of individual dignity are essential objectives of Islamic law. Consequently, any social practice or structure that threatens women's lives or treats them as inherently inferior contradicts the ethical orientation of the Qur'an and the broader objectives of Islamic teachings (Riyani, 2017).

This perspective creates an important connection between Qur'anic interpretation and the theological responsibility to safeguard women's lives, dignity, and fundamental rights. The Qur'anic rejection of female infanticide, unjustified killing, and practices that devalue human life can be extended through a contextual interpretation to address contemporary forms of gender-based violence. In this regard, laws and public policies designed to prevent femicide and protect women can be regarded as practical manifestations of Qur'anic ethical principles. Legal protection is therefore not separate from religious values but can function as an institutional expression of the Qur'anic commitment to justice, compassion, and the preservation of life (Bakar, 2018).

A thematic reading also enables contemporary femicide to be understood in relation to the underlying logic of certain *Jāhiliyyah* practices. Although modern femicide occurs in different social, legal, and cultural circumstances, both may emerge from a patriarchal worldview that constructs women as burdens, threats to family reputation, or objects whose lives are subject to male authority. In this context, concepts of family honor can become distorted into mechanisms for controlling women's behavior and, in extreme circumstances, legitimizing violence against them. Such a perspective fundamentally conflicts with the Qur'anic conception of human dignity, which does not make a person's worth dependent upon gender, social status, or conformity to patriarchal expectations (Sakinah et al., 2024).

The analysis further indicates that femicide is sustained by several interconnected structural factors. These include rigid norms surrounding family and social honor, the normalization of masculine forms of violence, gender inequality within domestic and public institutions, and weaknesses in systems designed to protect victims and prevent violence. When violence against women is culturally normalized or treated as a private family matter, perpetrators may receive social tolerance, while victims face barriers to reporting and obtaining protection. Consequently, addressing femicide requires more than imposing criminal sanctions after violence has occurred. It requires transforming the social and ethical structures that allow gender-based violence to develop and persist.

From a Qur'anic perspective, social transformation should be built upon the principles of *raḥmah* (compassion), *'adl* (justice), *ma'rūf* (ethical and respectful conduct), and *karāmah insāniyyah* (human dignity). These values establish a framework for relationships characterized by mutual respect, shared responsibility, protection, and rejection of violence. Within this framework, religious teachings have a significant role in critically examining interpretations of family honor, authority, and gender relations that may legitimize discrimination or violence against women. Islamic education and religious preaching can become important instruments for promoting this transformation by presenting the protection of human life and dignity as fundamental religious obligations. Such an approach demonstrates that preventing violence against women is not merely a response to contemporary human-rights discourse, but is also consistent with the ethical objectives of the Qur'an and the broader principles of Islamic teachings (Lindstedt, 2023).

The findings of this study generate two major implications. First, from a theological and normative perspective, Muslim communities possess a strong Qur'anic basis for unequivocally rejecting femicide and supporting social and governmental policies designed to protect women from violence. The protection of women's lives should be understood as part of the broader Islamic commitment to justice and the preservation of human dignity. Second, from a socio-legal perspective, an integrated strategy is required. Criminal law enforcement must be strengthened alongside religious education that affirms the equal dignity of women and community-based prevention programs that challenge patriarchal interpretations of family honor. Such integration can help transform harmful social norms before they develop into acts of violence (Harahap & Zulkarnaen, 2024). Ultimately, the Qur'anic approach to femicide demonstrates that the struggle against violence toward women involves both legal protection and ethical transformation. Preventing femicide requires institutions, religious communities, families, and society to work collectively in creating an environment in which

women's lives are protected, their dignity is respected, and violence can no longer be justified through gender, honor, tradition, or social expectations.

2.4. The Relationship between the Condemnation of the Qur'an and the Phenomenon of Modern Femicide

The modern phenomenon of femicide, the killing of women because of their gender identity, is an extreme form of gender-based violence that signals a global humanitarian and moral crisis. Since its inception, the Qur'an has strongly condemned the killing of women, both directly and indirectly, through the prohibition of killing female children during the period of ignorance. In QS. At-Takwir [81]: 8–9 it is stated, "And when the female babies buried alive are asked, for what sin were they killed?" This verse shows a moral and spiritual condemnation of violent practices rooted in a patriarchal system that oppresses women. According to Fazlur Rahman in Major Themes of the Qur'an, this verse reflects the major ethical transformation brought by the Qur'an in eliminating the culture of gender-based violence and replacing it with respect for human life and dignity (Rahman, 1982).

The Qur'an's condemnation of the murder of women can also be understood as a critique of social systems that negate the human value of women. In the contemporary context, modern femicide is a new form of *wa'd al-banāt* (the burial of girls alive), not physically, but in the form of structural oppression and systematic violence against women. Amina Wadud in Qur'an and Woman emphasizes that the main message of the Qur'an is to uphold justice and gender equality as a manifestation of God's mercy for all humanity (Amina Wadud, 1999). Violence against women in the form of modern femicide is thus a violation of the principles of rahmah (compassion), 'adl (justice), and *karāmah insāniyyah* (human dignity) that are the foundation of Islamic teachings.

Furthermore, the Qur'an views human life as sacred and requires its protection. In QS. Al-Ma'idah [5]:32 it is stated, "Whoever kills a soul, it is as if he has killed all mankind." This verse emphasizes that the murder of women—as human beings full of rights and dignity—is a violation of universal human values. According to Seyyed Hossein Nasr in The Heart of Islam, this verse shows that the sanctity of human life is absolute and any act of violence that takes a human life is a major sin against divine principles. Thus, if in the era of ignorance the form of violence against women was direct through the killing of female infants, then in the modern context, femicide has become a more complex form of violence involving social, economic, and ideological factors that all deny the human values upheld by the Qur'an (Nasr, 1996).

Islam emerged as a moral reformation that upheld humanitarian values and refined previous teachings. One of the most heinous practices in the Arab society of the Pre-Islamic period was the burial of female children alive (*wa'd*), due to the belief that female birth was a family disgrace. The Quran strongly condemns this practice as contrary to justice, human dignity, and a civilized social order. Islam even restored women's status as noble creatures, equal before God. QS. an-Naḥl: 58–59 describes the psychological reaction of the ignorant society who were filled with shame when informed of the birth of a daughter. According to al-Ṭhabarī, this verse is a criticism of their corrupted standards of values that encourage burial alive. Ibn 'Abbās interpreted "wa huwa kaẓīm" as a deep sadness that reflects this moral injustice. In general, the Qur'an emphasizes the prohibition of killing a soul without a valid reason (*bi al-ḥaqq*), as in QS. al-Isrā': 33, which allows the taking of life only in certain legal contexts such as qishāyes. QS. al-Mā'idah: 32 reinforces this value by stating that killing one soul without right is like killing all of humanity. Ibn Kathīr views this as an affirmation of the great honor of humankind in the sight of Allah (Shagyrbay, 2026).

Islam also challenged and dismantled gender-based hierarchies by affirming the fundamental equality of human beings. QS. al-Nisā' [4]: 1 emphasizes that humanity originates from a single soul, establishing a principle of shared human dignity rather than superiority based on gender. This foundation rejects attitudes that demean, ridicule, or discriminate against others. Beyond the Qur'an's general prohibition of unlawful killing, particular attention is given to the historical practice of female infanticide, as illustrated in QS. al-Takwīr [81]: 8–9: "And when the female infant buried alive is asked, for what sin was she killed?" The verse presents a powerful moral condemnation of *wa'd al-banāt*, the practice of burying female children alive. Al-Ṭabarī explains *al-maw'ūdah* as referring to a girl who was buried alive by people of the *Jāhiliyyah* because they considered her existence shameful or humiliating. Significantly, the Qur'anic depiction places the victim at the center of the eschatological questioning, rather than the perpetrator, thereby exposing the injustice and irrationality of the practice and emphasizing the innocent victim's dignity (Churchill, 2018).

The Qur'an not only morally rejects femicide, but also offers a theological and ethical basis for women's liberation from violence. The principle of maqāyesid al-syarī'ah places protection on the soul (ḥifẓal-nafs) and

honor (*ḥifẓal-'ird*) as the primary objective of Islamic law. Kamali in Shari'ah Law: An Introduction asserts that protecting women's lives is an integral part of the objectives of shari'ah (Kamali, 2008). Therefore, the Qur'anic teachings on justice and respect for women's dignity must be translated into social and legal policies that reject gender violence in all its forms. In other words, the Qur'anic condemnation of the murder of women during the pre-Islamic period serves as the theological basis for rejecting modern femicide, as both are rooted in the denial of women's human value (Ismail et al., 2024).

2.5. Moral, Humanitarian, and Theological Values in the Qur'an

The Qur'an, as the principal source of Islamic teachings, possesses a function that extends beyond its role as a foundation of religious law or *sharī'ah*. It also serves as a comprehensive moral and humanitarian guide that directs human beings toward a life characterized by justice, dignity, responsibility, and social harmony. The ethical teachings contained in the Qur'an provide fundamental principles for regulating human behavior and constructing relationships that reflect divine values. Among the central moral principles emphasized throughout the Qur'an are honesty, compassion, patience, justice, mutual respect, and responsibility. These values are not limited to individual spirituality but also provide an ethical framework for developing a just and humane social order (Hamid et al., 2025).

One of the Qur'anic verses that explicitly illustrates this moral framework is QS. al-Naḥl [16]: 90, which states that Allah commands justice, excellence, and generosity toward relatives while prohibiting indecency, wrongdoing, and transgression. The verse contains a comprehensive ethical message concerning the relationship between individual conduct and social responsibility. Justice (*'adl*) represents the obligation to treat others fairly and to avoid actions that produce oppression or discrimination. Meanwhile, *iḥsān* reflects a higher moral orientation in which individuals are encouraged not merely to fulfill their obligations but also to demonstrate kindness, compassion, and generosity. The prohibition of *faḥshā'*, *munkar*, and *baghy* further establishes boundaries against actions that undermine morality, social order, and the rights of others. Thus, the verse demonstrates that Qur'anic morality is fundamentally oriented toward the creation of a social environment in which justice and human welfare can flourish.

Fazlur Rahman, in *Major Themes of the Qur'an*, emphasizes that the Qur'an possesses a strong ethical and moral orientation that should be understood dynamically and contextually. According to this perspective, Qur'anic moral teachings cannot be reduced to isolated rules detached from their broader objectives. Instead, they constitute an integrated ethical vision intended to cultivate human moral consciousness and encourage responsible participation in society (Rahman, 1982). The Qur'an seeks to transform individuals and communities by developing an awareness of justice, responsibility, and accountability before God. Consequently, Qur'anic morality remains relevant to contemporary social challenges because its fundamental values can be applied to changing circumstances while maintaining their ethical objectives (Ichwan & Amin, 2022).

In addition to moral values, the Qur'an contains profound humanitarian principles grounded in the recognition of human dignity and equality. QS. al-Isrā' [17]: 70 states that Allah has honored the children of Adam, providing a theological foundation for the universal dignity of humanity. The honor granted to human beings is not presented as a privilege restricted to particular ethnic groups, social classes, genders, or cultural communities. Rather, it represents a fundamental status shared by humanity as a whole. This principle establishes that every person possesses inherent dignity and therefore deserves protection from violence, oppression, discrimination, humiliation, and arbitrary deprivation of fundamental rights.

The concept of human dignity is particularly significant when applied to contemporary issues of gender-based violence. If every human being is honored by God, then women cannot be regarded as inherently inferior or as individuals whose rights and dignity are subordinate to patriarchal interests. Amina Wadud, in *Qur'an and Woman* (1999), argues that a gender-sensitive reading of the Qur'an reveals a fundamental principle of spiritual and moral equality between men and women. Gender differences cannot therefore be used as a justification for establishing systems of domination that undermine women's dignity. From this perspective, Qur'anic humanitarian values challenge discriminatory practices that treat women as less valuable or less deserving of protection (Fitriyah & Rahman, 2024).

The humanitarian orientation of the Qur'an also encompasses the protection of essential human rights, particularly the right to life, dignity, security, and freedom from oppression. Violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual coercion, and femicide, contradicts these principles because such acts violate both physical existence and human dignity. A humanitarian reading of the Qur'an therefore requires religious teachings to contribute actively to the prevention of violence and the protection of vulnerable individuals. This

approach demonstrates that Islamic values are not limited to ritual observance but also involve concrete ethical responsibilities toward other human beings (Halwaini, 2025).

The theological dimension of Qur'anic teaching is primarily rooted in *tawḥīd*, namely the affirmation of the absolute oneness and sovereignty of God. However, *tawḥīd* should not be understood merely as a theological doctrine concerning God's existence and uniqueness. It also carries profound ethical and social implications for human life. Recognition of God as the ultimate authority requires human beings to exercise responsibility, justice, honesty, and compassion in their relationships with others. Human authority is therefore not absolute but remains subject to divine ethical principles.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, in *The Heart of Islam*, explains the significance of *tawḥīd* as a principle that connects spiritual consciousness with social responsibility. Recognition of the unity of God is closely related to recognition of the unity and interconnectedness of humanity (Legenhausen, 1997). Human beings are equally creatures of God and therefore have a moral responsibility to respect one another. Within this framework, oppression, violence, exploitation, and injustice cannot be regarded as merely social problems; they also represent failures in realizing the ethical consequences of *tawḥīd*. A genuine awareness of divine unity should encourage the development of relationships based on justice, compassion, and respect for human dignity.

The relationship between theology, morality, and humanity therefore becomes particularly important in addressing contemporary social problems. Religious commitment cannot be separated from ethical responsibility. Faith should manifest itself through actions that preserve life, protect dignity, prevent oppression, and promote justice. This understanding also reinforces the Qur'anic principle that religious devotion involves both a vertical relationship with God and a horizontal relationship with fellow human beings. Overall, the moral, humanitarian, and theological dimensions of the Qur'an form an interconnected ethical framework for developing faithful, responsible, and civilized human beings. Moral values provide guidance for individual behavior, humanitarian principles establish the basis for social relationships, while theology provides the spiritual foundation and ultimate orientation of human conduct. These three dimensions cannot be separated because each reinforces the others. A theological commitment without moral responsibility risks becoming purely formal, while humanitarian concern without spiritual orientation may lack a transcendent foundation. The Qur'an instead integrates both dimensions through the balance between *ḥablun min Allāh* (the relationship between human beings and God) and *ḥablun min al-nās* (the relationship among human beings) (Muzaiyanah, 2022).

The Qur'an is not limited to functioning as a source of legal regulations but also constitutes a comprehensive foundation for universal moral and humanitarian values. Its teachings on justice, compassion, human dignity, equality, and the prevention of oppression possess enduring relevance across different historical and social contexts. Through contextual and ethically informed interpretation, these Qur'anic principles can be applied to contemporary challenges, including gender discrimination, gender-based violence, and other forms of social injustice. Such an approach enables the Qur'an to contribute actively to the transformation of social structures that undermine human dignity. Ultimately, its ethical vision supports the development of a society based on justice, responsibility, mutual respect, protection of human life, and recognition of the equal dignity of every human being.

2.6. The Relevance of the **Principles of Rahmah, 'Adl, and Karāmah Insāniyyah to the Issue of Gender** Violence

The Qur'anic principles of *raḥmah* (compassion), *'adl* (justice), and *karāmah insāniyyah* (human dignity) provide a comprehensive ethical foundation for addressing gender-based violence, which continues to constitute a serious social problem in contemporary societies. These three principles represent interconnected dimensions of Qur'anic morality that reject oppression, discrimination, exploitation, and every form of violence that undermines human dignity. When applied to relations between men and women, they establish an ethical framework in which gender differences cannot become a justification for domination, coercion, or violence. The Qur'an instead promotes relationships based on mutual respect, responsibility, compassion, and justice (Az-Zahra et al., 2024).

The principle of *raḥmah* represents one of the fundamental ethical orientations of the Qur'an. Compassion requires human beings to recognize the vulnerability, dignity, and needs of others and to respond to them through care and respect. This principle is particularly relevant to marital relationships, which the Qur'an describes as relationships intended to produce tranquility, affection, and mutual compassion. QS. al-Rūm [30]: 21 explains that Allah created spouses from among human beings so that they may find tranquility in one another and established between them affection and mercy. The verse presents marriage as an ethical relationship

rather than a hierarchical structure of domination. The presence of *mawaddah* and *raḥmah* indicates that the relationship between husband and wife should be characterized by emotional security, mutual care, and respect (Dewantari, 2016).

From this perspective, violence against women fundamentally contradicts the Qur'anic principle of *raḥmah*. Physical violence, psychological abuse, sexual coercion, verbal humiliation, and other forms of gender-based violence create fear and suffering rather than tranquility and compassion. Fazlur Rahman's understanding of Qur'anic morality emphasizes the importance of ethical transformation and the development of moral consciousness within society. In this framework, *raḥmah* should not be interpreted merely as an individual emotional attitude but as a social and ethical principle that encourages empathy, responsibility, and protection of others. Consequently, the normalization of violence against women reflects a failure to embody the Qur'anic ethic of compassion (Hadi, 2020).

The second principle is *'adl*, or justice, which constitutes a central value in the Qur'anic moral worldview. QS. al-Naḥl [16]: 90 explicitly commands human beings to uphold justice and goodness while prohibiting indecency, wrongdoing, and transgression. Justice in this context extends beyond formal legal equality. It encompasses moral responsibility, fair treatment, balanced relationships, and recognition of the rights of every individual. Within gender relations, justice requires that women be recognized as full moral subjects who possess rights, dignity, agency, and responsibility.

Amina Wadud, particularly in *Qur'an and Woman*, emphasizes the importance of interpreting Qur'anic teachings through the broader principle of divine justice rather than through historically conditioned patriarchal assumptions (Wadud, 1999). From this perspective, interpretations that justify the domination or mistreatment of women should be critically examined when they contradict the Qur'an's wider ethical orientation. Gender-based violence, whether physical, sexual, psychological, or verbal, constitutes a violation of *'adl* because it establishes an unequal relationship in which one party exercises power through coercion and the other is deprived of security and autonomy. Justice therefore becomes a normative foundation for preventing violence, challenging discriminatory structures, and ensuring that women are treated as equal human beings (Butt & Ali, 2026).

The third principle is *karāmah insāniyyah*, or human dignity. The Qur'an affirms this principle in QS. al-Isrā' [17]: 70, which states that Allah has honored the children of Adam. The verse establishes a universal conception of human dignity that is not dependent upon gender, race, ethnicity, social position, or economic status. Every human being possesses inherent worth because human dignity is grounded in divine creation. Consequently, actions that humiliate, exploit, torture, or kill another person represent serious violations of this divinely granted dignity. Muhammad Asad, in *The Message of the Qur'an*, interprets the Qur'anic affirmation of human honor as a principle with universal significance. Human dignity cannot be selectively applied to certain groups while being denied to others. In the context of gender-based violence, this principle provides a strong theological argument against practices that regard women as inferior, subordinate, or merely as objects of control. Violence against women is therefore not only a violation of social or human rights but also an affront to the dignity bestowed upon human beings by God (Asad, 1980).

The principle of *karāmah insāniyyah* can also be connected to the objectives of *maqasid al-shari'ah*. The protection of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) requires the prevention of physical harm, killing, and other forms of violence that threaten human existence. At the same time, the protection of honor and dignity (*ḥifẓ al-'ird*) requires safeguarding individuals from humiliation, sexual exploitation, degradation, and attacks on their personal integrity. These objectives demonstrate that the protection of women from gender-based violence is consistent with the fundamental purposes of Islamic law.

The three principles—*raḥmah*, *'adl*, and *karāmah insāniyyah*—therefore constitute an interconnected theological and ethical framework for confronting gender-based violence. *Raḥmah* encourages compassion, empathy, and mutual care; *'adl* establishes the obligation to create fair and non-oppressive relationships; while *karāmah insāniyyah* guarantees the inherent dignity and worth of every individual. Together, they demonstrate that violence against women contradicts the fundamental ethical orientation of the Qur'an. These principles also indicate that combating gender-based violence requires more than legal punishment after violence occurs. It requires a transformation of social values, religious interpretations, family relationships, and institutional practices that may normalize gender inequality. Religious education, Qur'anic interpretation, family counseling, legal protection, and community-based prevention can all contribute to this transformation when they are grounded in compassion, justice, and human dignity.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, in *The Heart of Islam*, emphasizes the interconnectedness of spiritual and ethical dimensions within Islamic teachings. Recognition of God should manifest itself through ethical conduct toward fellow human beings. Accordingly, the protection of women from violence represents not merely a contemporary human-rights concern but also a manifestation of religious responsibility. Upholding compassion, justice, and human dignity allows Qur'anic values to become living ethical principles capable of responding to contemporary challenges. Therefore, efforts to eliminate gender-based violence should be understood as part of the broader Qur'anic mission to establish a social order characterized by justice, compassion, equality, and respect for the dignity of every human being (Nasr, 2002).

3. CONCLUSION

The Qur'an unequivocally condemns every form of femicide, whether manifested through the direct killing of women, as practiced in the pre-Islamic period through *wa'd al-banāt* (female infanticide), or through contemporary forms of gender-based violence that may emerge from patriarchal structures and social inequalities. The Qur'anic rejection of such practices is grounded in universal ethical principles that affirm justice (*'adl*), compassion (*raḥmah*), and human dignity (*karāmah insāniyyah*). These principles establish that women's lives possess the same intrinsic value and sanctity as those of men and must never be sacrificed because of cultural traditions, economic considerations, family honor, or discriminatory social norms. Several Qur'anic passages reinforce this principle. QS. al-Takwīr [81]: 8–9 portrays the horrifying questioning of the girl who was buried alive, thereby exposing the moral injustice of female infanticide. Similarly, QS. al-Mā'idah [5]: 32 emphasizes the profound sanctity of human life, while QS. al-Isrā' [17]: 31 explicitly prohibits the killing of children due to fear of poverty. Taken together, these verses demonstrate that the Qur'an seeks to dismantle social practices that devalue human life and construct hierarchies based on gender or economic status. Consequently, the Qur'anic condemnation of violence against women extends beyond a purely theological prohibition and provides a normative foundation for establishing a society based on justice and human dignity. From this perspective, contemporary femicide can be understood as a modern manifestation of the dehumanizing attitudes associated with *jāhiliyyah*, particularly when women are treated as less valuable or expendable because of their gender. Through the framework of *maqasid al-shari'ah*, especially *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (protection of life) and *ḥifẓ al-'ird* (protection of dignity and honor), Islam establishes a moral responsibility to prevent violence against women. Therefore, the Qur'anic condemnation of femicide should be understood not merely as a spiritual or theological message, but also as an ethical and social imperative to promote justice, gender equality, protection, and respect for the inherent dignity of every human being.

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